

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 TRSE-00 /041 W
-----117140 062227Z /66

R 061633Z SEP 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1610
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 6598

USEEC, OECD, AND EMBASSIES

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, SP
SUBJECT: CNT REJECTS PROPOSED PLANT COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

REF: MADRID 6550

1. LEADERS OF THE ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST CNT (NATIONAL
CONFEDERATION OF LABOR) MET IN MADRID SEPTEMBER 3-4
AND DENOUNCED THE PLANT COMMITTEE ELECTIONS NOW SCHEDULED
FOR BEFORE NOVEMBER 15 (REFTEL). THEY CITED AS REASONS
THE "INTERFERENCE" IN THE RIGHTS OF THE WORKERS SUCH
GOVT-SPONSORED ELECTIONS WOULD REPRESENT, THEIR ALLEGED
TENDENCY TO FOSTER FRANCO-STYLE "VERTICALISM" IN TRADE
UNIONISM, AND THE DESIRE OF OTHER UNIONS (INCLUDING THE
SOCIALIST UGT, COMMUNIST-DOMINATED SWC, AND INDEPENDENT
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SOCIALIST USO) TO GUARANTEE BY MEANS OF THESE ELECTIONS THE
"PACT WITH BOURGEOISIE" THEY ALLEGEDLY YEARN TO MAKE.
THE CNT ADVOCATES "DIRECT LABOR DEMOCRACY" AND TOOK THE
OCCASION TO ONCE AGAIN ENDORSE THE EPHERMERAL CONCEPT OF AN
"ASSEMBLY OF WORKERS" AS THE ONLY WAY TO PROPERLY REPRESENT
THE WORKERS AND NEGOTIATE ON THEIR BEHALF. LEADERS FOR A
PARTICULAR ACTIVITY OR STRIKE, THEY AFFIRMED, SHOULD BE

CHOSEN FROM THE FLOOR OF SUCH AN ASSEMBLY, WITHOUT THE INTERVENTION OF LISTS OF UNION CANDIDATES OR OTHER "INAPPROPRIATE" PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICES.

2. THE CNT LEADERS ALSO REJECTED THE PROPOSAL (WHICH HAS BEEN BRUTED ABOUT LATELY) TO DIVIDE THE "PATRIMONY" OF THE NOW DISMANTLED SPANISH SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION AMONG THE FREE TRADE UNIONS ACCORDING TO THEIR SHOWING IN THE UPCOMING PLANT ELECTIONS. THEY PROPOSED INSTEAD THAT AN INTER-UNION COMMITTEE BE ESTABLISHED TO SUPERVISE THE DIVISION. CONVENIENTLY OMITTING ANY GUIDANCE AS TO HOW SUCH A COMMITTEE WOULD REACH ITS DECISIONS.

3. A CNT SPOKESMAN EXPRESSED SATISFACTION AT THE PROGRESS MADE BY THE UNION OVER THE LAST YEAR (MEMBERSHIP HAS REPORTEDLY RISEN FROM 20,000 TO 100,000 CLAIMED TO BE "DUES PAYING" WITH PLANS FOR FURTHER EXPANSION TO 300,000 BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR), WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY EXPRESSING SCEPTICISM AT MEMBERSHIP CLAIMS OF THE LARGER UNIONS, ESPECIALLY THE SWC (800,000). THE RESIGNATION OF THE CURRENT NATIONAL CNT LEADERSHIP WAS ANNOUNCED, INCLUDING SECGEN JUAN GOMEZ CASAS. A NEW NATIONAL LEADERSHIP IS SCHEDULED TO BE ELECTED SHORTLY.

4. COMMENT. THE STRONGLY ANTI-COMMUNIST CNT-ALTHOUGH IT HAS POTENTIAL (ESPECIALLY IN CATALONIA)- REMAINS A CONFIDENTIAL

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POORLY ORGANIZED CONFEDERATION WHOSE REGIONAL COMPONENTS MORE OFTEN THAN NOT GO THEIR OWN WAY WITH LITTLE IF ANY COORDINATION. COMPETENT TRADE UNIONS LEADERS ARE TO BE FOUND IN THE CNT. BUT THEY ARE UNFORTUNATELY OFTEN OVER SHADOWED BY YOUTHFUL PARTISANS OF THE ANARCHO-FOLKLORE SCENE WHO TEND TO DESTROY WHAT IMAGE THE CNT MIGHT HAVE OF PROMOTING SERIOUS TRADE UNIONISM. THE CNT'S REJECTION OF ANY "SOCIAL PACT" IS NO SURPRISE- ALL THE MAJOR SPANISH UNIONS HAVE TAKEN THE SAME POSITION. THEIR RELUCTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN UNION ELECTIONS PERHAPS OWES AS MUCH TO THEIR OWN PERCEPTION OF WEAKNESS, VIS A VIS THE UGT AND SWC, AS TO FIDELITY TO ANARCHIST PRINCIPLES. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT THE CNT HAS ALSO REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CURRENT SERIES OF GOVT LABOR NEGOTIATIONS ON SUAREZ ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROGRAM (MADRID 6289).EATON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR, COMMITTEES, ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 06-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MADRID06598
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770322-0878
Format: TEL
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770995/aaaadclj.tel
Line Count: 109
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fc1b784d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 MADRID 6550
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1379523
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CNT REJECTS PROPOSED PLANT COMMITTEE ELECTIONS
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, SP
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fc1b784d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009